1: Burrows--126 (1947-48) Woleaians 1-2
116, 431, 796, 828, 152 Ifalik

"Gifts are expected from the chiefs on certain public occasions. Other men of prominence may also offer them. Commonest of the occasions are religious assemblages, when the gods are invoked in song and dance. Any of the chiefs may walk along in back of the rows of dancers, holding in his right hand, high and away from the body, some small present. A piece of native plug tobacco is the commonest. At this time all the people are seated. Anyone near enough and bold enough may spring up, snatch the gift from the hand of the chief, and return to his seat. Boys are the most eager takers, but older men may spring up too. Women never do. Apparently that much audacity would not be considered becoming to them.

Not all the chiefs take part in this giving. I can recall seeing WolpaitIk only on the receiving end. This is not necessarily a sign of greed. He was the youngest of the chiefs, both in years and in length of service, and may have been more comfortable in the humbler role. Yet the fattest man on the atoll can not be absolved from all suspicion of greed.

Paliuilimar, too, only sat and looked on. Probably that was because of age and weakness, for at other times he was a ready giver. Once when a group of young men were going about the island at night, singing to exorcise an evil spirit, they called on Paliuilimar at his house early in the proceedings. The old chief appeared in the doorway, holding a particularly large piece of the usual plug tobacco. This was a gift to reward the pious endeavors of the young men and their leader Gargeligar, oracle of the high

gods.

Wolpetau, the highest chief, seemed to be the most lavish giver. Once he distributed tobacco among the women at the close of a public meeting held for purposes of government rather than religion. This time he did not hold up the tobacco to be snatched from his hand, but passed among them where they sat and handed it out without requiring them to stand up for it."

Lütke tells us a few things about the religion, but it is uncertain whether everything deals with Oleai. There is also doubt about the following report by Freycinet, which does not seem to be without importance for the total picture and therefore shall be treated here: Hammo or Hammulap can be seen only by a few, but they hear him and serve as media for his orders, through shamanism. Even children may be the carriers of his news. The obsessed howl and have convulsions. Shamans are covered with oil, painted, and carry two lances; they shout as they approach. They attack the sick person who rises and tries to defend himself. They fight, then throw away the lances, and dances of the rods are performed for days and sometimes for weeks until the sorcerer is definitely the victor. Thus the will of Anulap becomes known. An annual festival is celebrated for Anulap and lasts for an entire month. It means that the men must stay away from women often up to two months. No sail may be hoisted, and during the first week no boat may set out to sea. Strangers are not allowed to land on the island. Four days before the main celebration, coconuts and breadfruit are gathered. The morning of the principal day is spent fishing. [281] Then everyone goes to the temple, led, which is an ordinary house. It is closed for one night. The next morning after sunrise, while the population is assembled, the chief enters the house through the northern door. He is elaborately ornamented and carries a stick in his right hand, with which he apparently feels his way. He looks down in front of himself and mumbles to himself. His brother, leading a small group of islanders, enters the house just before the chief through the

door on the southern side. The people are seated, but rise when the chief enters and sits down on three beautiful mats. Then the others may also sit. No one else is allowed in the sanctuary. The brother goes up to the provisions that are set up and takes a little from each one of the fifty dishes. He gives the largest fish and the biggest coconut to the chief with a basket and cracks 50-60 nuts for him. The rest he distributes among the people present and then sits down next to his brother to partake of the breakfast with him. As remuneration for his services, he receives the husks of the nuts, which are of great value for the making of ropes. Within half an hour everything is over. Now the house is once more accessible for anyone. Only the ashes must not be touched. Sick people usually stay in the building, but not alone for fear of Anulap.

28: Spiro--65 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 796, 805 Ifalik

"Having neither calendars, nor formal reckoning of time, religious ceremonies are not held at regularly defined intervals, but are called by the chief at the suggestion of Arogeligar, when he feels the time is propitious."

28: Spiro--71
116, 755, 796

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"No ceremony was held for over a month and a half. On November 27, a minor ceremony was held in the late morning, but only the people of the Felarik district were in attendance. It was held, as usual, at bwuter Tilitr. When we arrived, we saw the alter surrounded by red and white colored maramar, which were distributed among the people, each receiving at least one of each color. Arogeligar then made a speech addressed to the chiefs telling them that they must ensure better care of the shrine. He then announced a medicine making ceremony for the following day, and told the women to prepare the times, which we shall explain below. The people then gathered about the shrine to say the traditional farewell.

The women retired to prepare the times. The times are coconut mats, made of young coconut branches, which the young men hang on trees along the shores, encircling both islands. Before they are hung on the trees, five men sing a ritual song over them. The words of the song cling to the Times, and as they sway in the breeze the words are automatically repeated over and over again. The people, of course, cannot hear the words, but the alus and illness can, and when they attempt to enter the islands and cause illness, they are frightened by the song, and do not enter. Times, therefore, may very well be a contraction of itoae mas, 'not die'."

28: Spiro--135-136 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1-2
116, 562, 593, 796, 462 Ifalik

"If a husband and wife should walk through the village together, the wife always follows behind him, never preceeds him. But what was most impressive with respect to this differential treatment of the sexes was the following treatment, which I observed at each religious ceremony. The religious ceremonies are usually held on Falalap. A channel of about 30 yards separates the two islands. Ordinarily the people walk across the channel, since the water at its highest point only reaches to their chest. Now the people 'dress-up' for the ceremonies--new skirts or loin cloths, painted faces, flower garlands, feather head-dresses, etc. It is understandable that they do not wish to get wet. Consequently what amounts to a ferry service is set up. The young men paddling canoes back and forth across the channel bearing passengers. But the passengers are almost invariably men! Since time is short, and there are not too many canoes, the men ride across, but the women wade through the water, despite the fact that the men would dry off sooner than the women, since they wear only loin cloths. Their answer to this differential treatment was that the men do the hard and dangerous work, whereas women's work is light. 'Man work strong. Woman no can work, for too hard. He work on canoe and house for woman. Very hard work that man. Woman-work more down. Man work on tree, maybe he fall down. [136] He catch fish, maybe shark cut him.' This is most interesting in view of the fact that women actually work much harder and longer than

men. Women almost always have work to perform, whereas the men spend hours just sitting about in the canoe houses. Men's work may theoretically be more dangerous, but no one has ever fallen from a tree, and the men know of only one case in which a man was attacked by a shark. These reasons, therefore, are patent rationalizations.

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

CHAPTER VI

FISH WATCHING

DANCE rehearsals continued almost every night, and it was clear that we were expected to attend despite the interference with both work and sleep. Somehow I didn't understand until some time later that this dance business was largely a response to a request of Ted's. He had particularly wanted, during his first stay on the island, to see some of the important traditional dances, the ur dances, but no such ceremonies had taken place. Before we started for Ifaluk this time, Ted had written to the anthropologist of the Trust Territory Government, expressing the hope that we would be there in the proper season for the dances. The anthropologist had passed the word on to the chiefs by way of the trade ship which called at the island about a month before we arrived.

It turned out that we were too late. The proper time for the ur dances is at the close of the period of ceremonial fishing by torchlight for flying fish. But the Ifalukians, wishing to please Ted, rearranged their ceremonial schedule. They couldn't bring the flying fish out of season, but they could perform the dances.

The dances were really, as Ted explained, a religious ceremonial designed to please the gods. But, as Ted further noted, this did not mean that the content had to take some special religious form: the kindly gods of Ifaluk enjoyed whatever interested the people.

Religion seemed in general very unobtrusive on Ifaluk. There were sacred spots like the altar in the back of the Fan Nap (completely unused during our stay); there was the wild tangle of vegetation in sacred

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

corpse is wrapped in seemingly endless coils of rope, weighted with stones, and taken out to sea for burial. The canoe used for this then cannot be touched for four days, four being in general the magic number on Ifaluk.

The alus, the spirits of the dead, are sometimes benevolent and sometimes malevolent, apparently depending on the character of the person from whom they came. The malevolent spirits cause all sorts of trouble, including most kinds of illness. Mel Spiro, in his psychological studies of the Ifalukians, found fear of alus to be dominating both consciously and subconsciously. We had no encounters with alus, but we didn't seek any, and the attitude toward alus of the young men who worked with us seemed to be largely ritual, but we did not try to probe into their psychology.

In theory the dances, then, were designed to please the alus, both the high gods and the ordinary spirits. The elaborate ur dances which required these endless nightly rehearsals, were surely for the high gods; but all of the alus, like all of the people, must have enjoyed them. The rehearsals finally ended in the big show, which was held on July 22nd, at midday in the schoolhouse clearing.

Don and I were off taking advantage of a low tide to work on profiles of the reef when a messenger came to tell us the dance was about to start. When we got there the men had already formed into a line along the north margin of the clearing. They were all dressed up, with bows of the ivory-like unfolded coconut leaves on arms and legs, with coconut-leaf skirts over loin-cloths, with necklaces of flowers and of the greenish-ivory coconut leaves, with garlands of flowers, and surmounting all, a block of pith over the forehead, wrapped in red paper and tinfoil (from cigarette packages) and bearing a cluster of tall white feathers (perhaps from the fairy terns; but more probably and prosaically from chickens). Faces were marked with red turmeric, a streak of red along the jawline, and dabs on the cheeks and arms.

They put on a fine show. Some of the pieces were songs or chants, with an accompaniment of stamping and clapping. Others involved more complicated gesturings and posturings. In one, two men standing with outstretched arms pantomimed man-of-war birds—tilting, soaring and gliding—while the rest knelt facing each other, chanting the

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

796 [126] story. This went on for nearly an hour, with the three of us too busy with cameras and recording machine to really appreciate what was going on. Then there was an intermission. Arueligar, the high priest, distributed the two cases of corned beef and the two cartons of cigarettes we had donated for the occasion. Dancers and onlookers refreshed themselves by drinking coconuts. Then the dance was resumed, this time by the women, who formed their line along the west margin of the clearing. Their dress was similar to that of the men, except that of course they wore lava-lavas, not loin-cloths, under their coconut-leaf skirts.

796 178 533 Ted was interested to discover that two of the dances performed by the women were new—a concrete demonstration that the traditional form of the ur dance does not necessarily impose traditional subjects. One of the new dances, turning on a poem composed by Letaweriur, Yani's wife, concerned the first coming of the Americans to the island. It was a very long chant, recounting in detail the appearance of the first ship, the delivery of an official document, the nature of America and the Americans, and the like. Ted's translation of the opening stanza is:

[539]

Now all our women rejoice;
Now the Americans have come.
This is pleasing to the chiefs.
They have given us a paper.
This place is to rise;
This island is to be lifted up.
The chiefs say we are to dance.
We will dance, we will rejoice!
This very month, for this is a good year! Eil
The Japanese are gone.
We did not like their rough ways.
The gods have been good to us;
Now our crops are safe.
The Americans talk kindly. . . .

527 123 262 When the women's dance was over, the people scattered into small groups—made up by family, by household, or by friendship—for the feast. Perhaps "feast" is too strong a word, since there was nothing